

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
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P R 111005Z APR 78

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2877
INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
CINCPAC HONOLULU
DIA WASHDC
COMIPAC HONOLULU

S E C R E T BANGKOK 10508

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

EO 11652: XGDS-2
TAGS: PBOR, PEPR, CB, TH
SUBJ: THAI-CAMBODIAN BORDER CLASH

SUMMARY: IN ONE OF THE WORST OF RECENT CLASHES, A SEIZABLE
CONTINGENT OF THAI COMMUNIST (CPT) INSURGENTS, SUPPORTED BY
KHMER ROUGE, ATTACKED A BORDER SELF-HELP SETTLEMENT IN BURI-
RAM PROVINCE, KILLING 22 PERSONS AND DESTROYING CONSIDERABLE
PROPERTY. END SUMMARY.

1. ON APRIL 9 A LARGE GROUP OF CPT RAIDERS, ESTIMATED BY LOCAL
OFFICIALS AT 300, AIDED BY KHMER ROUGE FROM CAMBODIA, ATTACKED
THE SELF-HELP SETTLEMENT OF BAN KRUAT, BURIRAM PROVINCE. IN
AN ENGAGEMENT WHICH LASTED FOUR HOURS 22 THAIS WERE KILLED,
INCLUDING TWO POLICE, FOUR BORDER PATROL POLICE AND 16
VILLAGERS. THE RAIDERS BURNED SOME 70 STRUCTURES AND PLUNDERED
THE SETTLEMENT OF TRUCKS, RADIOS AND OTHER BOOTY, BEFORE

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RETREATING TO BORDER AREA HIDEOUTS.

2. PM KRIANGSAK TOLD THE PRESS IN BANGKOK APRIL 10 THAT ACTION
WOULD BE STEPPED UP AGAINST THE TERRORISTS. THAI MILITARY
SOURCES SAID THAT AIR STRIKES WERE CONDUCTED IN THE BORDER
AREAS AGAINST THE ATTACKERS. ALTHOUGH THE PRESS HAS TREATED
THE ISSUE VERY CAUTIOUSLY, REPORTERS INFERRED FROM THE PRIME

MINISTER'S REMARKS THAT AIR STRIKES HAVE ALREADY BEEN CONDUCTED AGAINST CPT CAMPS IN CAMBODIA AND OTHERS WILL FOLLOW. AT THE SAME TIME, FONMIN UPPADIT REFERRED AGAIN TO A "THIRD FORCE" TRYING TO SABOTAGE RELATIONS BETWEEN CAMBODIA AND THAILAND AS BEING RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RAIDS. UPPADIT ADDED THAT THAILAND SHOULD RESPOND POSITIVELY TO THE SINCERE EXPRESSIONS OF FRIENDSHIP EMANATING FROM PHNOM PENH. HE ALLUDED TO A MESSAGE ON RADIO PHNOM PENH APRIL 1 (WHICH WE HAVE NOT SEEN), SAYING THAT DEPUTY PM IEENG SARY WOULD VISIT BANGKOK WITHIN A FEW WEEKS.

3. THIS SERIOUS ATTACK FOLLOWS BY A WEEK AN ATTACK NEAR ARANYA-APRATHET DISTRICT TOWN BY THREE 107 MM "MORTAR" ROUNDS. (PRESS ACCOUNTS STATED THAT THE MUNITIONS WERE 107 MM ROCKETS. HOWEVER, ROYAL THAI ARMY PERSONNEL ON THE SITE CONCLUDED THAT MORTAR ROUNDS WERE INVOLVED.) THE ROUNDS LANDED OUTSIDE THE DISTRICT TOWN AND CAUSED NO CASUALTIES, BUT VISITORS TO ARANYA HAVE BEEN TOLD BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES THAT THE ROUNDS SEEMED TO BE WARNINGS FROM PHNOM PENH THAT CAMBODIA HAS THE CAPABILITY TO HIT THE TOWN IF THEY WISHED. LOCAL OFFICIALS HINTED THAT THE ROUNDS WERE PROBABLY RETALIATION FROM CAMBODIA FOR THE ALLEGED PROVISION OF ARMS BY THE CONSERVATIVE THAI NAWAPON GROUP TO KHMER RESISTANCE FORCES. LOCAL OFFICIALS CLAIMED THAT SEVERAL TRUCK-LOADS OF WEAPONS, MOSTLY AK-47S, HAVE BEEN INTERCEPTED RECENTLY BY THE THAI BORDER PATROL IN THE ARANYA AREA. OFFICIALS SAID THEY WERE SUPPLIED BY NAWAPON, WHICH IS THOUGHT TO HAVE LINKS HIGH IN THE THAI ARMY. OFFICIALS PRESUME THAT PHNOM PENH IS

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AWARE OF THIS SUPPORT AND WANTED TO INDICATE ITS DISPLEASURE BY THREE ROUNDS AT ARANYA.

4. COMMENT: THE ATTACK AT BAN KRUAT IS IN THE RECENT MORE SERIOUS PATTERN OF COLLABORATIVE ATTACKS BY THE CPT LINKED WITH THE KHMER ROUGE. WHILE UNDERTAKING MEASURED RETALIATORY STEPS, PM KRIANGSAK REMAINS PREPARED TO TRY TO RESOLVE THE BORDER DIFFICULTIES INVOLVING THE KHMER ROUGE THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS TO PHNOM PENH. HOWEVER, THE CPT ATTACKS ARE AN INCREASING EMBARRASSMENT FOR THE KRIANGSAK GOVERNMENT, PARTICULARLY WITH THAI CONSERVATIVES, SOME IN THE MILITARY, WHO WANT A "TOUGHER" POLICY TOWARD THE INDOCHINESE COMMUNIST STATES.

WHITEHOUSE

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NNN

Message Attributes

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